

(letter to Metro Santa Cruz, April 13, 2000)

Editors:

In your Nuz item "A bridge too far?" (March 29), People Power spokesperson Micah Posner is quoted as saying that the proposed Arana Gulch bike road would "decrease consumption and pollution." But what Posner forgets is that building roads is itself a form of pollution and consumption. Posner also fails to mention the heritage trees that will have to be cut down to make way for the bike road.

Ted Lopez claims that the bike road has been designed to "avoid the tarplant colonies." But this misses the point. Even if he manages not to pave over any of the remnant "colonies", the bike road would still harm the Tarplant's

chances of recovery, by fragmenting its habitat, by reducing the area where it can spread or migrate in response to changing conditions, and by complicating the task of managing the area for optimal survival of the plant.

Lopez claims that unleashed dogs are a greater threat to the Tarplant. But if so, then common sense suggests that we should be working to reduce that threat, instead of using it as an excuse to add another threat on top of it.

Micah Posner says that the bike road would "encourage new cyclists". But bicycling is not an end in itself. For myself and a lot of other bicyclists, it's a means of protecting the earth. It makes absolutely no sense to "encourage bicycling" at the cost of sacrificing wildlife habitat and biodiversity.

In their stubborn insistence on the fastest possible bike route at all costs, People Power seems to have lost sight of the principle of "consistency of means and ends". You can't save the earth by paving it. It's time to pull the plug on this destructive gold-plated boondoggle.

--- Don Fong